

A Non-Linear Narrative (Version 2)

By Peter David Smith

A boy called Joe One, a middle aged man called Joe Two and an elderly man called Joe Three are sitting in three chairs in a room full of chairs.

They take random turns at speaking.

Behind them is a screen showing school biology examples and photos of individuals growing up and passing through the seven ages of human life.

At the British Comic Convention at the Waverley Hotel in 1969 there was a vote to decide the comic book character most worthy of being revived. I thought of “Deadman” as a jokey answer but I actually voted for “Coma Man and the Catatonic Kid”, an imaginary character I had invented. Other people voted for “Deadman” which was proclaimed the winner.

In the middle of the night we tried to stay awake to watch “Alphaville” by Jean-Luc Goddard. I was in a half awake, half asleep state.

A state of snow extended in all directions. You could look at it from two directions and then watch the two versions morph into each other.

I stood still for a very long time. It worried people.

I looked into the mirror for a very long time, it worried people.

My face changed into a different face. It didn't worry me.

Underneath the water my hands were dry, even though they were under the water, they were dry.

Everything was snow. It was a kind of Siberia.

You could look at it from two directions and then watch the two versions morph into each other.

(A Dinner Gong is heard. Everyone ignores it)

It was like Cubism except that in Cubism you could see the different views of an object side-by-side or as facets in a broken crystal.

But these were not like those.

These were morphed into a waveform. A scale of degrees between one thing and another. The resultant form was warped. Warped along the lines of the bodies and the structures within a kind of frozen wasteland.

So we freeze into stone patterns of Frieze. Narrative Dadirri Irie Irie Irie.

The passage was constructed of Brutalist concrete blocks leading to narrow access points from which it was possible to reach the next area.

It is an art gallery.

It was flooded. Coma Man and the Catatonic Kid. I was 16.

Jim was a collapsar personality, a black hole in the space of his personal universe.

Sinking into the centre of the Earth.

Goats ran wildly across the field. In the far corner, a herd of sheep eyed them unenthusiastically.

We were in a half awake, half asleep state. The atmosphere in the room was vibrating silver. Lines of force were connecting the standing stones, the lines joined Scotland to South Australia. The 13 dancers morphed into each other.

Thrust and flick and push and stop and turn and go again. Each dancer in the line feeling in their gut the timing and the pheromone powered shape of progression.

Some chairs were arranged in an empty room.

There is much in what you say.

No-one speaks.

A cat makes eye contact with a passing human.

Somewhere on the night side of the planet two men were passing in the street when one of them struck the other in the face with an old worn out, leather glove.

"I'll call the police!"

"Is that what you can do?"

"Actually it is".

Thousands of miles away it was dawn and there weren't any tea bags.

The space between one musical note and another is as vast as the space between atoms in a molecule. The effect they have upon each other is warping, distorting, mutative.

The Lee-Enfield 303 rifle floated in the air behaving, for all the world, like a fairground balloon. The rifle was suspended in apparent reverse gravity on the end of a piece of string held by a pug-faced child with pimples.

The clouds in the sky were made of paint.

Kelly and Jones resumed their perpetual haggling about the ragged jacket and a raincloud burst outside the open window.

We found mind in the back of a cupboard.

June and Fran spent 25 minutes walking in and out of the living room, repeatedly sidestepping in the doorway to avoid each other. The room still had ashtrays, like something out of the 20th Century.

We do not distort ourselves as an homogeneous group. We are not distorted as an homogeneous group. We each distort and are distorted as individual units made up of shapes and forms which distort in their own ways, curving, squeezing, stretching, bending, turning concave or convex to suit their own story.

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